United Nations A/C.4/57/SR.12

General Assembly
Fifty-seventh session

Official Records

Distr.: General
10 November 2003
English
Original: French

Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Summary record of the 12th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Friday, 18 October 2002, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Maitland ..... (South Africa)

Contents

Agenda item 78: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief of the Official Records Editing Section, room DC2-750, 2 United Nations Plaza, and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrections will be issued after the end of the session, in a separate corrigendum for each Committee.

02-64755 (E)
0264755

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 78: Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (A/RES/56/225 A, A/RES/56/225 B and A/56/863)

1. **Mr. Guéhenno** (Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations) said that the past year had been a very good year for peacekeeping operations, culminating in East Timor's accession to independence on 20 May 2002 and the installation of a new Government in Sierra Leone following elections held in May 2002. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina would come to an end on 31 December 2002 and hand over its responsibilities to the European Union Police Mission, having successfully completed its mandate in the area of police reform and restructuring and developed guidelines and procedures that could be applied to future civilian police components of peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka was also winding down.

2. New challenges had emerged for two peacekeeping operations in Africa: the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), a traditional peacekeeping operation interposed between two States, and the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was deployed within a State whose conflict had had significant regional dimensions. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the first new operation established since the issuance of the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (A/55/305-S/2000/809) (Brahimi report) had been conceived quite differently: establishment of an integrated mission task force; deployment of a multinational force; heavy dependence on Afghan ownership of the process; integration of relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities under a single pillar; and designation of lead nations for tasks such as army and police restructuring, judicial reform and drug control.

3. Over the past two years there had been intensive debate on how to restructure and strengthen the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, laying the foundations for the innovations and enhancements required to make future peacekeeping operations more effective. The creation of 184 additional posts, while fewer than had been requested by the Organization, had helped build the capacities of the Department, although recruitment had been slower than expected in 2002 because of the sheer number of applications. Meanwhile, more needed to be done to ensure gender balance within the Department, as noted by the Security Council in its resolution 1325 (2000). In that context, he drew attention to two studies that highlighted both the positive and the negative impact that the introduction of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers could have on societies emerging from conflict; one prepared by two independent experts working on behalf of the United Nations Development Fund for Women and the other prepared under the auspices of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women. Those studies indicated that the Department and its partners must strengthen disciplinary measures and training programmes to ensure that a gender perspective was built into all aspects of their work.

4. Turning to peacekeeping operations themselves, he said that the Secretary-General would provide an update on follow-up to the recommendations made by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and in the Brahimi report, in his next annual report to the Special Committee. Six issues warranted particular attention on the part of the Secretariat and Member States. First and foremost, rapid deployment capacity: significant progress had been achieved, with the allocation of $140 million for the creation of strategic deployment stocks (SDS) with a view to rapidly equipping any new mission. That operation had been launched on 1 July 2002, when the funding had become available, and should be completed by July 2003, with the development of an inventory management system to be installed initially at the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi. A stock rotation and maintenance policy had been developed for all SDS commodities and would be implemented starting with the 2003-2004 budget cycle. More expertise must still be developed in areas such as supply chain management, warehousing, codification and cataloguing, however.

5. Materiel readiness was only one part of the equation; rapid deployment also required military, civilian police and civilian personnel. The on-call lists proposed in the Brahimi report in the context of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System posed problems in practice and required innovative

approaches, as the Special Committee had recommended in its most recent report. The Special Committee had also recommended that the Secretariat identify core planning teams within a generic mission headquarters. In response, the Military Division had prepared job descriptions for 154 positions, 9 of which would form the core planning element. Since those posts would have to be filled rapidly, military personnel would be selected from a list of candidates proposed by Member States, with due regard for geographical balance and mission requirements. To date 29 Member States had agreed to participate in the on-call lists. The on-call list system was complementary to a new rapid deployment level which had gone into effect on 25 July 2002. It was important, however, to widen the geographic base of on-call personnel and ensure that the system was fully utilized for the next new peacekeeping operation.

6. The Civilian Police Division had identified civilian police positions for a generic mission headquarters, in consultation with Member States, but Governments had not yet put forward candidates. On the civilian side, the Secretariat had now built a cadre of very seasoned staff, in both the substantive and the support areas, which would make it possible to release staff to new missions without detriment to the work at Headquarters. At the same time, efforts must be made to increase the number of senior staff, who were in short supply compared with their colleagues at other levels, because they played a critical role in organizing new missions. The Office of Mission Support was instituting new training programmes. Along with the systems for advance preparations, training programmes and in situ briefings, the on-call lists and SDS should shorten the deployment times for mission headquarters.

7. A perfect Department or a perfect mission headquarters was no substitute for the provision of troops in a timely manner. The situation gave cause for deep concern, because the majority of the troop-contributing countries were developing countries which could not continue to bear that burden alone. Of course, many countries were reducing their military budgets and their military resources were being overdrawn, whether for peacekeeping missions authorized by the United Nations or within voluntary coalitions of States. Those same countries were providing a major proportion of the financial contributions to peacekeeping operations and for humanitarian assistance and aid to development and reconstruction. Moreover, it would take time for the after-effects of past participation in the missions in Bosnia, Rwanda and Somalia to disappear.

8. At all events, the credibility and viability of United Nations peacekeeping operations were being jeopardized. Only the United Nations was able to provide a truly international response to threats to international peace and security, and when only one part of the world participated fully in operations, that universality was threatened. There was also a problem of capacities, because only a few countries could meet certain needs, and that situation had direct implications for the rapid deployment of forces in many areas. There was a need to secure the participation of Member States which were in a position to provide formed units as well as individual personnel. Member States attached high importance to peacekeeping operations, but encountered real obstacles to participating in them. A frank and open debate was necessary to find solutions to those problems.

9. With regard to African peacekeeping capacity, there was an urgent need to increase the number of countries able to provide well-trained and fully equipped contingents. As the summit meeting of the Group of Eight had stressed in its plan of action for Africa, the continent's peacekeeping capacity must be enhanced without delay, and to that end the mechanisms used for that purpose must be reviewed. In the first place, there was a need to consult regional and subregional organizations and African capitals, and Secretariat staff, including staff from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, had begun to do that with a view to determining how to proceed.

10. Bilateral efforts to train and equip potential troop-contributing countries were very useful, but they needed to be harmonized in order to ensure coordination between the various contingents participating in a peacekeeping operation. Standardization of the training material and courses used by national trainers was a major factor in ensuring coordination. The Department had made considerable progress in that regard over the past year, particularly in the development of a standardized generic training module. The Department's Training and Evaluation Service had conducted four seminars, each in a different region, in order to introduce the draft modules. The seminars had gained important feedback from troop-contributing countries, which should make it possible to finalize the modules by the end of 2002.

The next report of the Secretary-General, which would be submitted to the Special Committee, would include a detailed description of the standardized generic training module, and of the various training initiatives completed or under way, both for military personnel and civilian police, and for civilian personnel.

11. The training materials made little reference to the role of peacekeepers in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration because that role was traditionally undertaken at the bilateral level, in parallel with the peacekeeping tasks performed by the Blue Helmets. However, recent experience, especially in Sierra Leone, the Great Lakes region and Afghanistan, had demonstrated once again that the convergence of the two activities could not be ignored.

12. The composition of a newly formed military in the aftermath of war was a deeply political exercise involving ethnic, religious and regional balance. Scaling back the size of the army in a democratic State was closely linked to promotion of good governance and must be approached from a political, developmental and economic perspective. Any United Nations operation responsible for playing a central role in the political process must cooperate with bilateral actors participating in the reform of the security sector, for example to facilitate the payment of newly recruited soldiers, since many donors had difficulty in doing so directly, as was currently the case in Afghanistan. Political considerations were also very important in deciding who should be disarmed and demobilized and who should be recruited or retained within a new army. Security sector reform, on the one hand, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, on the other, were quite separate processes, but they were clearly related, and required specialized skills in many common areas. They were also linked with the intensive reconstruction efforts which, if well targeted and promptly undertaken, could provide jobs for demobilized soldiers.

13. The strengthening of national rule of law capacities was important to ensure the successful reform of national military structures. The role of each peacekeeping operation in that sphere must be specified in its mandate. The Special Committee had supported the Secretariat's proposal to create a small, new capacity within the Civilian Police Division responsible for providing advice on judicial matters and criminal law. The Department had recommended that the Executive Committee on Peace and Security should establish a system-wide task force in order to avoid duplication and to maximize existing competencies. That task force, which comprised representatives of 11 United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes, had been established and had submitted a detailed report in mid-August to the Executive Committee, which had approved it on 30 September. The Organization needed to consult more closely with local actors in the country concerned so as not to impose a strategy on them.

14. Regarding best practices, he said that he intended to make the Peacekeeping Best Practices Group fully operational by filling vacant posts, including that of the chief and deputy chief, by the end of 2002. It was vital for the Group to establish a solid and transparent working relationship with Member States, because that would be the Department's point of entry for a number of issues pertinent to the work of the Committee and the Special Committee, and for the application of best practices in general. It was essential that best practices from previous and ongoing missions should be reflected in planning, training and support for all current and future missions by establishing guidelines and procedures which would be compiled in the *Handbook on UN Multi-dimensional Peacekeeping Operations*. That handbook, which was intended for all staff serving in peacekeeping missions as well as troop- and police-contributing countries, United Nations agencies and international and national non-governmental organizations, was designed to promote better understanding of the establishment and functioning of peacekeeping operations.

15. The handbook, which would consist of two volumes, should be published by the end of 2003. The first volume, which would be printed, would contain a general description of the various elements and components which made up the myriad aspects of peacekeeping; the second volume, which would be published on a CD-Rom, would contain more detailed information on the chapters of the first volume. The handbook would reflect the evolution of peacekeeping operations and all Member States were invited to contribute their ideas on the subject. If they wished, they could contact the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit during the following month in order to take an unofficial look at the contents of the handbook.

16. Along with the preparation of the handbook, the Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit was reviewing lessons learned from the United Nations Mission in

Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and, when the research was more advanced, it would be very useful to have the views of Member States and of troop-contributing countries.

17. With regard to appointments to senior posts, which had not been created but were vacant because of staff movements, in some cases the candidates selected had not accepted the offers made to them; in other cases, it had been decided to expand the list of candidates in order to secure a better combination of skills, geographical representation and better representation of women and, for that reason, a new vacancy announcement had been issued. Experience had shown that it was preferable not to be too hasty so as to make the right choice. It was very hard to replace Major-General Tim Ford and Major-General Chitra Gurung, whose services and dedication had been remarkable, not because of a lack of candidates, but because of the need to choose between highly qualified candidates. The Secretary-General would soon be officially announcing his decision to appoint Major-General Martin Agwai of Nigeria, Deputy Force Commander of UNAMSIL, to replace Major-General Gurung as Deputy Military Adviser to the Secretary-General. Major-General Agwai's record in United Nations peacekeeping operations and in his own country indicated that he would undoubtedly be a valuable asset to the Department. He would be taking up his post over the next few weeks. The Secretary-General would soon make an official announcement of his decision to appoint Major-General Cammaert of the Netherlands as Military Adviser to replace Major-General Ford. Major-General Cammaert had distinguished himself in three United Nations peacekeeping operations on three different continents as commander of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (1992-1993); as commander of the forward headquarters of the rapid reaction forces on mount Igman, in support of the United Nations Protection Force (1995); and most recently, as force commander of UNMEE. In view of his experience at the head of the high readiness brigade, his contribution would be invaluable for initiatives to strengthen the rapid deployment capacities of the United Nations. The vacant posts at the director level had not been filled, because the selection procedures had not yet been finalized. That applied, in particular, to the post of director of the Civilian Police Division, for which the vacancy announcement had been recirculated recently.

18. In conclusion, he announced that, pursuant to paragraphs 126 and 127 of the report of the Secretary-General entitled: "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change" (A/57/387), the Department would be the lead department for UNAMA as of 1 November 2002.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.